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HISTORY

OF THE

CAPTIVITY AND PROVIDENTIAL RELEASE THERE-
FROM OF

MRS. CAROLINE HARRIS,

Wife of the late Mr. Richard Harris, of Franklin Co., State of N. York ; who, with Mrs. Clarissa Plummer, wife of Mr. James Plummer, were, in the Spring of 1835, (with their unfortunate husbands,) taken prisoners by the Camanche tribe of Indians, while emigrating from said Franklin Co. (N. Y.) to Texas ; and after having been made to witness the tragical deaths of their husbands, and held nearly two years in bondage, were providentially redeemed therefrom by two of their countrymen attached to a company of Santa Fe Fur Traders.



It was the misfortune of Mrs. Harris, & her unfortunate female companion (soon after the deaths of their husbands,) to be separated by, and compelled to become the companions of, and to cohabit with, two disgusting Indian Chiefs, and from whom they received the most cruel and beastly treatment.

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1838.

Mrs. Harris's Narrative.

It was by the alluring prospects held out by the Texian land speculators, that my husband, RICHARD HARRIS, together with our near neighbours, (Mr. CHARLES PLUMMER, and family,) were induced; in the Spring of 1835, to dispose of their farms (situated in Franklin County, State of New York) to bid a final adieu to their native homes, and commence a long and tedious journey to Texas. For a journey so far distant, and withal so expensive, my husband was but poorly provided; being possessed of but little ready money, (the produce, in part, of his farm,) and his friend and neighbour, in this respect but in little better condition; and myself, at that period, enjoying but a feeble state of health, and burdened with the care of a tender infant, less than five months old.

It was in the month of May that we commenced and pursued a route recommended to my husband, as the most safe and expeditious, (to wit:) first proceeding by way of the lakes and Ohio River to Cincinnati, from thence down the river to New Orleans; and from thence, by an overland passage to Texas, the place of our destination; and although, after a passage of some weeks, we succeeded in reaching New Orleans in safety, yet in the attempt of making the last passage mentioned, our sufferings were beyond the power of human conception; and which, finally, proved fatal to every member of both families, with the exception of myself, and my not less unfortunate companion in misery, (Mrs. Plummer,) whose lives, as the reader will learn, were spared to endure afflictions that can be better imagined than described.

In our attempt to reach the newly settled parts of Texas, by the route recommended to my husband, after leaving New Orleans we missed our way by following an Indian track, leading far west of Nacogdoches, and finally to a country wild and uncultivated, and inhabited by wandering tribes of Indians.

After crossing the Sabine River, we travelled several days and nights with a slow pace, and with great difficulty and fatigue; sometimes labouring over steep and lofty hills, and at other times through swamps and extensive marshes; and in addition to which, we suffered much by day from excessive heat, as we'l as from the bites and stings of the musquitoes, sand flies, and a numerous host of other winged insects peculiar to that climate. We thus continued to travel, pursuing a north-west course until early in the morning of the 20th August, when, as we had let our horses loose to graze, and were ourselves seated in mournful silence beneath the shade of a wide branching hemlock, partaking of almost the last of the humble fare with which we were provided, the sound of the trampling of horses' feet were distinctly heard, and apparently approaching the spot we then occupied; and before we had time to seek another and better hiding place, we were surprised and surrounded by a very considerable body of Indians, mounted on horseback; who, perceiving our defenceless situation, with discordant whoops and yells, dismounted, and made prisoners of us all. Although in our endeavors to reach some white settlement, we had suffered much, the twelve days that we had been travelling through what we had supposed, until now, a wilderness, uninhabited by any human beings but ourselves; yet, to this moment the life of my tender babe had been miraculously preserved!—and, although now a captive, that the little innocence might be still spared to me, I most earnestly intreated of those in whose power we then were; but too soon I found that my intreaties for mercy were ineffectual with those whose savage breasts glowed not with a single spark of humanity.

My unfortunate husband, and his not less unfortunate friend, Plummer, were both strongly pinioned, and bound to a tree by the savages; who, having burnt our waggons and loaded their pack-horses with the most valuable of their contents, Mrs. Plummer and myself were seized, and being stripped of our loose garments, were each mounted upon and secured to the backs of their horses; and, contrary to my ex-

pectations, my entreaties that my tender infant might not be taken from me, were yielded to; and it was still, for a little while longer, permitted to draw nourishment from its wretched mother's breast. The savages having finally arranged every thing to their mind, preparatory to their departure for their settlement, (about one hundred and fifty miles distant,) they set out therefor, apparently very much elated with their good fortune in capturing, with other prisoners, two females, for whom (as we afterward learned) a considerable bounty had been promised them on their departure, by two of their young sachems, whose wives (or "squaws") we were destined to become.

My husband was, on peril of his life, forbidden to hold any conversation with me, and the same was enjoined upon Mrs. Plummer; and to prevent which, they were both compelled to travel, mostly on foot, in front of the main body of savages. Mrs. P. and myself were compelled to travel about an equal distance in the rear. Having proceeded in this manner for the space of three days (encamping nights within temporary huts,) the strength of my poor suffering babe began to fail; and when attempting to hush its pitiful moans, and to revive it by pressing it close to my bosom, it was torn from my arms by a savage brute, and thrown into a bunch of prickly pears!—and which cruel treatment was repeated until it became almost lifeless, when a rope was tied around its body, by which it was attached to the horn of the saddle on which I was riding (an awful spectacle, indeed, for a poor disconsolate mother to behold!) and where it remained until in the very agonies of death, when it was taken therefrom by the same unfeeling ruffian, and thrown on a prairie, and there left to be devoured by the vultures! Alas! is there a mother, whose heart is not callous to every tender feeling, that cannot have, at least, some faint conception of what my feelings must have been at that moment!

My husband, who had been an eye-witness of this unprecedented act of cruelty, and unable to withstand it, snapped in twain the cord with which he was bound; and in the attempt to hasten to the relief of his beloved child, was intercepted, and so unmercifully beat and maimed by his savage captors, as to compel him to desist from his humane object, and to leave the little sufferer to its fate! It was, however, some consolation to its wretched parents to know that its sufferings could not have been of very long duration. The day

following we reached a small Indian village, apparently inhabited by a tribe similar to that to which our captors belonged, as they not only resembled them in person, but their habits and manners appeared very similar. It was at this village that we tarried one night, and which was then inhabited principally by squaws and their papooses, and a few aged males; the younger class having left the morning previous on an expedition west, in quest of provision, of which they appeared but poorly supplied. It was at this village that we met with an aged white man, who, although a Mexican by birth, could speak some English, and who informed us that he was first taken prisoner by the savages, (several years since,) but was soon after set at liberty, and since that period had voluntarily remained with them. He had been told that many tribes still further west could boast of more or less captives, who (with the exception of the females) were treated with much severity; while the latter were treated with more lenity, being in most cases adopted by and compelled to cohabit with Indian chiefs or sachems! The reader can better judge than the writer can describe, what must have been her feelings on the reception of such woeful tidings as was communicated by the aged Mexican. Our only hope was, that he might, for some reason unknown, have misrepresented facts; but, alas! too soon did we find by what my unfortunate female companion, as well as myself, afterward experienced, that he had exaggerated nothing! Nay, it proved with us even worse than what he had represented! We were likewise told by our informant that "the savages by whom we were captured, were of the Comanche tribe, who lived a wandering life, and had maintained their independence against the powers of Spain and the Mexican states for more than one hundred years; that they were very numerous, and more warlike and independent than any other tribe in America, and a terror to the inhabitants of the frontier provinces of Mexico; that they had plenty of excellent horses; and the warriors, when on an excursion, were always well mounted; that the food on which they principally subsisted, was smoked and dried flesh of wild stags, an animal with which the country farther west abounded; that our misfortune in falling into the hands of these savages might be imputed (after crossing the Sabine) to inclining our course too far west."

The food allowed us, was scarcely sufficient to sustain na-

ture ; but, on this account, we did not suffer so much as from excessive heat, and fatigue, produced by the manner in which we were compelled to travel ; but my unfortunate husband, as well as his friend Plummer, suffered more in this respect than either of the other captives ; for while we were allowed to ride the whole way on horseback, they were obliged to travel much on foot, over steep hills and extensive prairies of brambles, thorns, and various kinds of prickly plants ! Indeed, I cannot furnish my readers with an account, day by day, of this difficult and fatiguing journey ; but, as respected our savage masters, every mile seemed rather to exhilarate, than to diminish their strength or depress their spirits ; for while we (whose miserable captives we were) were almost overcome by the hardships we had experienced, and by the dreadful forebodings of the awful fate that might yet attend us, the savages (who apparently delighted more in the affliction of torment than the alleviation of distress,) were, no doubt, much elated at the prospect of not only receiving their promised reward, but of enjoying the opportunity of displaying us, poor friendless mortals, as the trophies of their savage valour.

About noon of the fifth day from that of our capture, the Indian whoop was sounded by our captors, which we doubted not was intended as a signal to apprize their savage brethren of their destined village, of their near approach—as the whoop was almost instantaneously re-echoed by them ! In about fifteen minutes afterwards we were met by a very considerable number of their Indian friends on horseback ; and among whom, were, as we supposed, three or four Chiefs, who were distinguished from the others by a cap of feathers, and other ornaments, with which they usually decorate themselves. Immediately on their arrival, both parties came to a halt, and dismounted ; and after conversing with each other for a short time, I was approached and seized at the same moment by two young chiefs, and pulled off my horse ! and said chiefs, having still hold of an arm each, continued pulling me with all their might in different directions, which caused me to shriek aloud with affright as well as with extreme pain, occasioned thereby ! My poor husband being a near witness to the harsh manner in which I was treated, and my helpless condition, once more succeeded in breaking asunder the cord or withes with which he was bound, and hastened to my assistance ! but, in his endeavours to rescue

me from their savage grasp, his right arm was nearly severed from his body by a blow from a tomahawk, held by one of the chiefs. Had it been the fate of the poor man to have been instantly dispatched, it would have been a great mercy; as he was immediately thereupon made the subject of most cruel torture! While unable to arise, and while the blood was gushing from his deep and ghastly wound, he was seized by two savages, and by them held in a standing position over a blazing fire until life became extinct! This sight (at the very idea of which all but savages must shudder) afforded the highest diversion to his inhuman tormentors; who demonstrated their joy by correspondent yells and gesticulations! and, during the horrible transaction, the two young chiefs having loosed their hold of me, to settle their dispute at once, drew their knives, and after some dangerous thrusts at each other, they were separated by some older chiefs, who recommended that their pretended claims to me should be decided by lot! I being, as it appeared, the favorite choice of both—being twelve years younger than my unfortunate companion, (Mrs. Plummer,) who was too in a much more feeble state of health than myself. I was indeed at this moment so overcome by the shocking spectacle which I had just beheld, in the tragic death of my dear husband, as in a measure to impair my reason, and thereby render me quite indifferent as to what my fate might be! When I became myself, I found my left arm clasped with iron grasp by the hand of one of the young chiefs, and who was endeavoring to lead, or rather to drag me to the Indian village, situated less than half a mile distant.

Although my sufferings, in our long and tedious journey through a wild and pathless wilderness, had been such as no one of my sex probably ever before experienced, and my feelings (by a view of the tragic and painful death of my beloved husband and infant,) such as not to be described; yet they were not to be compared with what were at that moment produced by the awful certainty that I was about to be doomed to a yet more dreadful state of misery and wretchedness! When we reached the Indian village, I was almost stunned by the frightful whoops and yells of the savages by whom I was surrounded—and not until the crowd was in some measure dispersed (by heavy blows inflicted without respect to age or sex, by the savage by whom I was still led,) did I discover that my not less unfortunate companion

(Mrs. Plummer) was in a situation similar to that of my own, she being held by the arm by another Chief, and a few feet therefrom, lay her bleeding husband, apparently breathing his last ! and her only surviving son, then about five years of age, held with savage grasp by him whom, in all probability, his unfortunate father had received his mortal wound !

For this moment I saw no more of Mrs. Plummer until near eleven months thereafter. As regarded myself, I was soon given to understand that the brutal treatment that I had anticipated, was to be more than realized !—that I was indeed to be adopted by, and compelled to cohabit with, a barbarous and blood-thirsty Savage ; and one whose murderous hands had, in all probability, been stained by the innocent blood of my murdered husband ! If I ever felt a willingness, nay, an anxious desire, to be called hence to the world of spirits, it was at that moment ! and ought such a wish to cause surprise, when there is not probably a Christian female on earth, who, placed in my situation, that would not have preferred death to life ! Yes, in its worst forms, to that of becoming the companion, and yielding to the fulsome embraces of a disgusting and detestable Savage !

Alas ! however revolting the idea, such, indeed, was my fate ! for a poor, forlorn, and friendless captive, as I then was, there was no other alternative. Any thing that would appear like resistance on my part, would only have subjected me to all the tortures that their inventive faculties could have given birth to !

Alas, how sudden and unexpected was the change of my condition in life ; but about five months previous, I was blessed with a kind and indulging husband and a beloved babe ; and enjoying happiness and contentment by the fire-side of our peaceful dwelling, where there were none to molest or make us afraid ; but, alas, at this instant, not only deprived of my beloved babe and its indulgent father, but myself a friendless captive, plunged into a state of inconceivable wretchedness !

Having often heard it remarked, that although the American Savage delighted in acts of cruelty and revenge, so peculiar to his nature, yet that it was contrary to his disposition, ever by a gratification of a beastly passion to misuse or abuse such unfortunate females as should fall into his hands ; I at

first felt somewhat encouraged by the hope that the loss of liberty would be the most of which I should have cause to complain ; but, alas ! too soon did I find, by awful experience, that this opinion as regarded myself and unfortunate companion, was a mistaken one.

No attempts were however made to gratify a such like brutal propensity until after the performance of a mock ceremony of uniting me agreeable to their Indian custom to the ruthless Savage whose companion I was to become.

Preparations for such a performance were made the day preceding that of my arrival at their village ; on which occasion a great number of the principal warriors, with others, were invited to assemble early at the wigwarm of him whose associate I was by compulsion to become.

The Savages, as they arrived, seated themselves in a circle on a mound of turf prepared for the occasion ; and while they were collecting, half a dozen or more of their squaws were employed in daubing my face, breast, and arms with vermilion, while others were as busily engaged in decorating my head with feathers of various kinds. This being completed. I was led, like a lamb to the slaughter, to the centre of the circle, by the young Sachem by whom I was to be espoused ! he being painted and decorated in a similar manner as myself.

In the centre of the circle I was met by one who appeared to be one of the most aged of the savages present, wrapped in an Indian blanket, and otherways decorated after the Indian manner ; by him, it appeared, that the ceremonies on the occasion were to be performed, and in the manner following. First, taking my hand and placing it in that of the young Indian, and immediately thereupon taking from his the said young Sachem's neck a string of small glass beads, and placing them around my own ; at the same time muttering something in Indian which I could not understand ; but, immediately thereupon every Indian and squaw composing the circle, instantly arose, and joining hands, began singing and dancing to and fro around us ! continuing this until they became nearly or quite exhausted ; when, at a signal given, they re-assumed their seats—when the old and young Sachem, seizing me each by a hand, commenced a song and dance, similar to that which had been just performed by their savage companions !

But such was the state of my mind at that moment, that they found me but little disposed to yield to their will, or to participate in such amusements!

Indeed, had a natural death and Christian burial been afterwards allowed me, I should at that moment have been more willing to have united my voice with theirs in chanting my funeral dirge! Finding that I was not to be easily removed from the spot but by force, to intimidate me the old Indian, seizing the tomahawk which hung by his side, made a motion therewith as if intending to dash out my brains! but finding that all would not do, that I remained still fearless, and quite indifferent as to what might be my fate, he gave directions to his Indian brethren once more to arise, and repeat their dance as before—and which was accompanied with still more hideous whoops and yells!

Having continued this with very little cessation for half an hour or more, they began to disperse, each to his own hut; when I was led, or rather dragged, by the young Sachem to the one occupied by him, and where I was doomed to spend eleven months in a state of bondage and misery that beggars description! Being not only compelled to cohabit, but to yield to the beastly will of a Savage brute!

I kept no written record, nor will my memory admit of my furnishing my readers with a relation of the transactions of every day during the period of my captivity; a great part of which, in consequence of my sufferings in both body and mind, I was seriously indisposed and confined to the bed if it deserves the name, composed of dry moss and a few filthy Indian mats.

The savage in whose power misfortune had placed me, not only claimed me as his wife, but treated me as his menial servant whenever he had occasion so to do—compelled me to perform tasks that my feeble constitution would not admit of, while his own time was employed in fishing, the chase, and other favorite amusements.

Nine months from the time that I first became a tenant of his loathsome dwelling, being sent to the distance of four or five miles to bring home the hides of some wild animals that he had killed the day previous, I was met by an Indian on horseback, wearing the badge of a Sachem, whom I did not recognize at first, but who manifested some gladness to see me; and in broken English invited me to accompany him to

his wigwam then in view to see "my sister," his "white squaw."

Thinking that this might possibly be no other than my unfortunate companion in misery, Mrs. Plummer, and anxious to learn her situation if living, I accepted the invitation, and was conducted to his hovel, and into the presence of my friend, from whom I had been so long separated, and whose fate I had been so long ignorant of. But never did I before behold so great a change in the appearance of any human being in so short a period! I was no sooner beheld and recognized by her, than she, with hands uplifted, and with a heart-piercing shriek, swooned, and fell senseless to the floor! As soon as she recovered, and became in a measure composed, she gave me a minute and heart-rendering account of her trials and sufferings since the period of our separation; which had been, if possible, greater than my own!

She had been adopted, and compelled to cohabit with the savage with whom she then dwelt, and from whom she had received the most cruel treatment. Her little son but five years old had been taken from her, and conveyed she knew not whither! and about six weeks after she took up her abode in the hut which she then occupied, she gave birth to another, which was killed by the merciless brute in whose power she was, the moment after its birth! From her I learned, for the first time, that the tribe by whom we were captured and still held in bondage, were but a remnant of a very large tribe which infested the country nearly as far to the north-west as Santa Fe—that the detached party had been induced to take up their quarters here for the express purpose of harassing, intercepting, and preventing the encroachments of the Spanish Mexicans, who, by treachery as well as by force of arms, had already deprived them of a valuable portion of their country, and driven them back into the interior.

This information had been communicated to her Mrs. Plummer by an Indian hunter, who, in consequence of his intercourse with a company of whites, engaged in a similar pursuit at the far west, had learned to speak the English language so perfectly as to be well understood; and it so happened as the reader will hereafter understand that by the will of Providence this same Indian was finally made instrumental in effecting our redemption. After a short, but very affecting interview with my unfortunate female friend, and

with the promise, on the part of both, that we would as soon as possible again see each other, we separated.

I ought here to mention, that the garments with which we were clad when captured, having been worn to threads, Mrs. Plummer as well as myself had been presented with dresses peculiar to those commonly worn by their squaws, comprised of a blue cloth cap, a pair of moccasins, and an Indian blanket each.

Having been unable to find the hide of the animal for which I had been sent, I was obliged to return without it, and to meet the frowns of my Indian companion (as he termed himself; but, as such, Heaven forbid that I should even acknowledge him!) yet although in one respect he proved himself a savage brute, and at whose approach I could not refrain from trembling; in other respects he never attempted to lay violent hands upon me unless when intoxicated and it was seldom he ever returned from an Indian powwow, or carousal, in any other condition; then it was that he would manifest all that savage jealousy and thirst for revenge so peculiar to their natures. At such times my only safety was in flight to some neighbouring swamp, where I remained secreted until he became sober.

Having been once despatched by him on an errand similar to that last mentioned, by pursuing a tract leading in a different direction from that which I ought to have taken, I lost my way, and penetrated many miles into a dark and solitary forest, and where I remained wandering to and fro three days and two nights, without knowledge which course to take.—At the close of the third day, when nearly famished by reason of hunger and thirst, my ears was greeted by the well-known savage whoop proceeded from a south-eastern direction; believing it to be that of my savage master in pursuit of me, I endeavored to answer in as loud a manner as possible, and soon had the satisfaction to hear the whoop repeated, and apparently at a shorter distance from me; which I again answered, and in a few moments thereafter I beheld two Indians at a short distance on a rise of ground (one my master) on the run toward me.

As soon as they found that I was the object that they were in pursuit of, I was by signs given to understand that it was by the sagacity peculiar only to the sons of the forest that I owed my deliverance! As it was by the close examination of the imprint produced by my moccasins upon the dry

leaves that they were enabled to trace me, and to discover the course that I had taken!

There was on this occasion an uncommon degree of joy and satisfaction manifested by my Indian companion (so termed;) but whether it was to be imputed to a degree of genuine love and regard that he entertained for me, or the high value that he set upon me as one subservient to his will, and whom he had the right to barter away whenever an opportunity should present, I never knew, neither did I care much to know; for, in my view, he was still no other than the same savage barbarian—the vile murderer of my husband!

Three months after my interview with my unfortunate friend, Mrs. Plummer, and about fifteen months from the time that I first became an inhabitant of the Indian village, which since that period had been and was still my abiding place, the savages commenced preparations for a remove back to that section of the country where dwelt the greater portion of their tribe, from which they had been detached for the purpose mentioned; and for which, a few days after every thing having been made ready they took up their line of march.

Their wigwags having been constructed of the hides of bullocks, they were rolled up and secured to the backs of their pack-horses, as was their provision for the journey, and every other article of easy conveyance, and which was by them esteemed of sufficient value to transport to so great a distance.

It was on this occasion that I had another opportunity to meet with and converse with my sister captive Mrs. Plummer, and had too an opportunity to witness the harsh and cruel treatment which she received from the inhuman monster who professed to be her companion! who, for the most trifling fault, and more frequently for no fault at all, would beat and maim her in a most unmerciful manner; and in more than one instance in my presence to that degree as to cause her to fall prostrate to the ground from the horse on which she was riding.

And to such, and still more severe treatment, she informed me she had been made the unhappy subject ever since the period when it was her misfortune to fall into the hands of the savage brute! Although my affliction thus far had been very great, yet I have cause to believe that those of this truly unfortunate woman had been still greater. In addition to the loss of a kind and beloved husband butchered by the barbarians

at the moment of attempting to afford her protection, she had been an eye-witness of the murder of her newly born babe, and while bemoaning the loss of her only son, but five years of age, who but a few weeks previous had been torn from her arms, and conveyed she knew not whither! Surely, in a more wretched condition no one of the human race male nor female could ever be placed! Indeed, human imagination can hardly figure to itself a more deplorable situation!

Mrs. Plummer as the writer has been recently informed is about preparing a Narrative of her Captivity, Suffering, &c. for the press; to that we would refer our readers for a more particular account of her heavy trials and afflictions.

The Indians, with their squaws and papooses (as well as Mrs. Plummer and myself) were all mounted on horses, but the trials and difficulties that we poor unfortunate captives had been subject to in our late journey through the wilderness, produced fearful apprehensions that we should be exposed to the same again, but very fortunately for us we were in this respect agreeably disappointed, as the country through which we passed was much less marshy and uneven, and more free from the impediments that had before obstructed our passage; and hence our savage masters were enabled to travel with more speed, and were but nine days from that of our departure in reaching the place of their destination.

We were here, as we had been before when within a short distance of the Indian village, met by a very considerable number of its inhabitants on horseback, who came to welcome the safe return of their brethren after an absence of several months. The tribe was apparently composed of many hundreds, and their habitations being but mean and contemptible huts, their wealth appeared to consist principally in the great number of horses which they possessed. It was at this village that I soon found that the situation of both myself and my companion in misery (Mrs. Plummer) was to be rendered, if possible, still more wretched; it was here that we for the first time learned that the two Chiefs, with whom we had been compelled to cohabit, had some time previously been here untied (after the same manner that we had been espoused by them) to other female companions, and by whom we, having become the subjects of their jealousy and hatred, were treated in the most cruel manner—being, through their instigation, not only confined to a very scanty allowance of food of the meanest quality, but deprived of the privilege of

reposing at night under one and the same roof, being compelled to occupy a very small portion of one improved as a stable for their horses. But whatever our treatment, we were obliged to submit, and that without a murmur.

We found at this village no other captives but ourselves; but in almost every wigwam or hut were displayed more or less human scalps, of those who had at some former period fallen victims to their barbarity; some apparently were those of very young children! all of which were carefully preserved, and displayed on public occasions as proofs of their valor.

About four months after we had been brought to this village, we were eyewitnesses to a scene which no pen can truly describe!—a small detached party of the Calmanchees having the week previous set out for the purpose of depredating on some of the small white settlements, they were defeated with the loss of three of their number killed; the survivors, on their return the day following, fell in with an aged and unarmed Mexican, whom they seized, bound, and brought to their village a prisoner.

This poor man they very soon determined to sacrifice in revenge for the loss they had sustained in the deaths of the three who had fallen by the hands of the whites.

The unfortunate prisoner was put to death after their savage manner, having been bound to a stake around which faggots were piled to the height of his breast, and set on fire, and, while writhing with the most agonizing pains, the merciless savages manifested their joy and satisfaction by whooping and dancing to and fro around the burning pile, which they continued to do until death put an end to their unhappy victim's sufferings.

Although the Calmanchees were, as they had been for many years, the avowed enemies of the Spaniards, and their descendants the native-born Mexicans, yet they appeared to harbour no hostile feelings toward the whites of other nations; hence the hunters of such not only ventured among them without fear of danger, but were generally treated with great hospitality.

Had not the Savages, by whom we were first captured, supposed our husbands Mexicans, they no doubt would have shared a better fate; but the savages being unable either to speak or understand our language, and being unaccompanied by an interpreter, they (our husbands) were made the sub-

jects of savage cruelty, and were finally put to death in the manner as described!

Almost two years had now passed since it was my misfortune (as well as that of my suffering companion,) to be doomed to a state of worse than bondage, in which time we had been made to drink of the cup of woe to its very dregs! and, to add to our misery, there was not as yet the most distant prospect of, nor could we reasonably indulge a hope, of being ever again restored to liberty; and, indeed, began to look forward to death as the only termination of our captivity. But, in this we were agreeably disappointed! At a moment unexpected, Heaven was pleased to send (in answer to our prayers) the long wished for relief!

One morning, to my very great surprise, I was visited and accosted by one who from his appearance and dialect I judged to be one of my own countrymen; and after a moment's conversation, to my inexpressible joy I found that I was correct in my conjectures—he proving a native of the state of Georgia, and one of that class whose time is employed in hunting the most valuable wild game of the forest. He was accompanied by the Savage of whom mention is made in a preceding page as being the first of his countrymen met with whom we could converse in English.

It was from him that our kind friend and benefactor first learned our situation; and he (the Indian) volunteering his services as a guide, was conducted to the hut, a part of which I had been permitted to occupy.

My Indian master being present, and assenting to an application that I be allowed the liberty to accompany the white stranger to the hovel occupied by my unfortunate female friend (Mrs. Plummer,) we hastened thereto, to bear to her the joyful tidings of the prospect of our speedy deliverance—having been assured by him by whom I was accompanied, that, if in his power, he would effect our redemption before his departure.

We found the unhappy woman in a condition similar to that in which I had frequently found her, a prey to melancholy, and the subject of remorseless cruelty. After a short introduction, we, by his request, proceeded to furnish our friend and countryman with a brief narration of our capture, the cruel manner in which every member (with the exception of ourselves) of our unfortunate families had been put.

to death, and the barbarous treatment which we had since that melancholy period received from the Savages! At which recital our friend appeared much affected, and again repeated his assurances that he would not leave us until the consent of the Savages was on some terms or other obtained that we be allowed to accompany him on his return home! and which, thanks to Providence, he soon after happily effected, by paying to them the sum of four hundred dollars as the price of our redemption.

A few days after that on which we obtained our liberty, we were visited by two more of our countrymen, who were also hunters, and the friends and acquaintances of our deliverer.

Having made the necessary preparation, we set out with our friends (all mounted on valuable horses,) for the land of our birth—our once happy homes! The knowledge which our friendly guides had of the country through which we passed on our return, rendered our journey less irksome and more expeditious.

In little more than four weeks from the time of bidding adieu to a savage wilderness, without any very serious accident attending us, we reached New Orleans. When about to bid a final adieu to that cruel race of people by whom I had been almost two years held in bondage, and from whom I had received such inhuman treatment, I could not refrain from bursting into tears of joy! Still there were intervals (during the two or three first days of our journey,) when it seemed almost impossible that I was entirely free from the power of those merciless wretches! And was sometimes pained with the idea that unforeseen events might still detain me among them!

At New Orleans my suffering companion Mrs. Plummer was prevailed on by an old acquaintance to remain a few weeks for the improvement of her health, which had not only become much impaired, but by the ill usage and privations which she had been subject, was reduced almost to a skeleton! As regards myself, although by my great sufferings my health still remains much impaired, and my constitution so much broken as to render it very probable that I shall enjoy no better health until the day of my death, yet during the whole course of my captivity I bore my sufferings and privations with a great degree of fortitude.

Having by the will of Divine Providence arrived once more on Christian ground, and permitted once more to breathe free air, (although I have been prevailed on to take up my abode with an only sister, many miles from my native home,) I cannot fail to improve this last opportunity that I may ever have to express my sincere obligations to my friend and benefactor, who so humanely rescued me, as well as my suffering female companion, from the hands of the cruel Savages. I shall not attempt to describe, because I have not a power of speech equal to the task, the strong sentiments of gratitude with which such uncommon kindness and humanity affected me; and to conclude, I cannot refrain from expressing in some degree a portion of that regard which I profess sincerely to feel for the welfare of my fellow-beings, those especially, who are of my sex. I hope that they may not be led astray, but improve, by the unwise examples of others; and be not easily persuaded to part with their peaceful homes, where with little labour a comfortable subsistence might be acquired, to expose themselves and families, if not to the cruelty of merciless Savages, to all the privations and hardships so generally attendant on those who seek a residence in a new and uncultivated wilderness.

Emigration has for two or three years past been the prevailing principle which has actuated not only the needy adventurer, but, in too many instances, has proved the cause of the ruin of families, once comfortably settled in a land where the conveniencies of life amply abound. It is, indeed, true, as has been remarked by a late eminent writer that the soil, climate, and natural resources of the eastern and middle states, constitutes every thing that can render life desirable; and, aided by industry and frugality, all the blessings that can be derived from competency and civilization may be enjoyed in this happy land of our ancestors.

Yet such appears to be the restless disposition of a portion of mankind, that, notwithstanding they may be nurtured in a country abounding with every necessary of life, too many appear to be dissatisfied, and leave a comfortable home, to seek after wealth and popularity in the trackless wilderness.

Such was indeed, the unwise choice of my poor unfortunate husband and his not less unfortunate neighbor, who, in hopes of acquiring an easier living, bade adieu to their peaceful homes, never again to revisit them, but to become the

victims of the bloody tomahawk! Hence it is, that by yielding too readily to the persuasions, as well as alluring prospects which have been held out by those who manifest so great a disposition to sport with the credulity of their fellow beings, and who have latterly engaged so deeply in the speculations of the wild lands of the West, and of which many possess but doubtful titles, it has been my misfortune, in the short space of two years, not only to be dispossessed of a comfortable home, but to be bereaved, and in the most cruel manner, of a kind and indulgent husband and a much beloved darling child.

In bringing my affecting narrative to a conclusion, I have only to add that I have furnished my readers with as minute a detail of my trials and afflictions as my present circumstances will admit of; and here permit me to inquire, is it not sufficient to satisfy every reasonable person that I owe my life, as well as my restoration to liberty, to the interposition of a kind Providence?—True it is, that should it please the Father of mercies to visit his friends and followers with afflictions, even as great as those with which he has been pleased to visit me, the recollection that all events are under the disposal of infinite wisdom and goodness will repress the rising murmur, and diffuse a delightful calm through the soul far superior to the exultation that arises from earthly posterity.

Subject to the control of this Almighty Guardian, all the trials of life are designed to establish our faith, to increase our humble dependence, to perfect our love and fortify our patience; nor has my unfortunate friend and late companion in misery Mrs. Plummer less cause to be thankful that, amid all her trials and afflictions, her life has been still miraculously preserved—although at the time of her capture, in delicate circumstances and naturally of very slender constitution, yet she was not only doomed to become the companion of a savage of the most brutal disposition, but almost every day for the space of nearly two years the subject of his revengeful, as well as jealous and lustful passions! The narrative of Mrs. Plummer, which is now preparing for the press, and will be issued in a few days, will comprise a faithful, although sorrowful detail of her sufferings from the day of her capture to that of her liberation from savage bondage.

“CAROLINE HARRIS.”

CERTIFICATE.

"I, Ebenezer C. ELFORT, a native of Madison State of Georgia, hereby certify, that early in the fall of 1837, being in company with others at Santa Fe, for the purpose of purchasing furs, I was there informed by a Calmanchee Indian of the captivity of two of my unfortunate countrywomen, and who were still held in bondage by the savages ; and by my request, was conducted by the said Indian to the wigwams, where were confined said unfortunate white women, and whom (as correctly narrated by Mrs. HARRIS) I succeeded in redeeming out of their hands, and restoring to liberty.









